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USS KITTY HAWK (CV 63)  
Public Affairs Office  
FPO AP 96634-2770

E-mail: [pao@kitty-hawk.navy.mil](mailto:pao@kitty-hawk.navy.mil)  
Web: [www.kittyhawk.navy.mil](http://www.kittyhawk.navy.mil)



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## Sailors lend a helping hand to Thai community

By Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Matthew Reinhardt



**LAEM CHABANG, Thailand** – About 160 sailors from USS Kitty Hawk (CV 63) and Carrier Air Wing 5 spent part of their four-day port visit to Laem Chabang, Thailand, taking part in four community service projects.

“We want to show that we’re there for more than to have fun,” said Aviation Ordnanceman 1<sup>st</sup> Class (AW) Oliver Brown, leading petty officer for Kitty Hawk’s G-3 Division. “We’re ambassadors to both the United States and the Navy.”

Brown took part in two projects in Thailand. He joined 79 other Sailors at the Nikom Sang Tonaeng School, interacting with children and painting classrooms. The next day, Brown supervised a group of 20 sailors visiting the Camillian Center for HIV-positive children aged between 6 and 10 years old.

“Seeing the smiles on the kids’ faces when they saw that we were there for them, the whole thing was overwhelming, but it was very rewarding in the end,” said Brown. “I think we really made a difference.”

Sailors also went to the town of Chantaburi, spending a day with a Thai family and cleaning beaches around the Bunglamung Home for the Aged.

“[Thailand] was very generous in wanting to host us; they had a good chance to see that we’re good people and we actually want to help,” said Religious Program Specialist 3<sup>rd</sup> Class (SW) Michael Munoz, a community service project coordinator.

Munoz and several others took the trip to Chanterbury to interact with Thais. This project was different than any of the others provided by Kitty Hawk's Religious Ministries Department.

"We weren't working, fixing, or cleaning anything. We focused on interacting with their community, enjoying the sights with them," said Munoz. "We were having fun with the community and improving our relationship with them. It's important for them to see we're willing and able to help them and work with them on our own time."

There are almost always too many volunteers for the community service projects, said Munoz. Nearly twice as many people signed up as there were slots available.

"It's hard to turn them away," said Munoz. "We want everyone who wants to volunteer to be involved."

The Kitty Hawk Strike Group is the largest carrier strike group in the Navy. It includes the Kitty Hawk, the aircraft squadrons and staff of Carrier Air Wing 5, the guided-missile cruisers USS Chancellorsville (CG 62) and USS Cowpens (CG 63), and Destroyer Squadron 15 staff. The group's ships and destroyer squadron staff are based at Fleet Activities Yokosuka, Japan, and the air wing and staff are based at Naval Air Facility Atsugi, Japan.

To find more news about the Kitty Hawk Strike Group, visit the Navy NewsStand at [www.news.navy.mil/local/cv63](http://www.news.navy.mil/local/cv63).